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ABSTRACT

A 1990 U.S. Department of Labor strike force found child labor violations in more than 1,760 of 3,776 businesses investigated. Data from the American Youth Work Center, the National Consumers League, and the New York State Department of Labor also indicate increased numbers of child labor violations. Child labor has a long history in the United States. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act raised the full-time working age and put limitations on labor conditions for 14- and 15-year-olds. Every state, including New York, has passed laws regulating child labor. Employed teens have been reported to have lower grades and fail to complete homework; on the other hand, they may learn good workplace habits and practical skills and gain self-confidence. The challenge to public policy makers is to develop a set of conditions that allows adolescents to gain from their work experience while avoiding the pitfalls that teenage employment entails. Although efforts are currently underway at both state and federal levels to tighten child labor laws, the laws will be meaningless unless they are effectively enforced. Since enforcement is essentially "complaint" driven, teenagers must be informed of their rights. A New York State curriculum project has been designed to acquaint teens with state labor law provisions. Schools and employers must work together to protect children and ensure that their work experiences enhance their educational experiences. (YLB)

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CHILDREN AT WORK: PERIL OR PROMISE?

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BY PAUL F. COLE

CHILDREN AT WORK: PERIL OR PROMISE?

by Paul F. Cole

> Child labor is a wicked practice - one totally abhorrent to all ideals of intelligence...There is nothing in later life that can ever compensate a neglected or abused child for the losses which were a part of its childhood. As the human body and the human mind and the human personality develop they remain fundamentally unchanged. There is a time to grow and a time to develop which never returns...
>
> Samuel Gompers, 1916

Early in 1990, the U. S. Department of Labor launched "Operation Child Watch," a nationwide strike force to crack down on child labor law violations. Investigators found more than 1,450 youngsters, 14 to 17 years old, illegally employed in hazardous occupations and about 225 children under 14 years of age illegally employed. Other violations found 14 and 15 year-olds working for more hours than legally allowable during the school week. Overall, "Operation Child Watch" found child labor violations in more than 1,760 of the 3,776 businesses investigated. The total from sweeps in both March and June was more than 20,000 minors illegally employed with $6.4 million in fines assessed.

Working America's Children to Death, a report by the American Youth Work Center and the National Consumers League, reported that child labor violations have soared from 8,731 in 1984 to an estimated 40,000 in 1990. The report cited scores of injuries and deaths of children at work:

* A 15-year old boy was found working in a New York sweatshop sewing pleats into skirts for $1 an hour in a room where the temperature was 8 degrees.
* A 17-year old boy racing to beat the Domino's Pizza 30-minute guaranteed delivery time crashed into a telephone pole and died instantly.
* A 14-year old boy got his leg torn off at a Maryland car wash.
* A 13-year old boy was driving a tractor uphill when it tipped over and crushed him to death.
* A 17-year old Portsmouth, N. H., boy lost three fingers, had 788 stitches and fused knuckles after he put his left hand into the rotating blade of a cheese grater at a pizza shop.
* A Government Accounting Office (GAO) study reported that 48 minors were killed and 128,000 injured in work-related accidents during 1987 and 1988. Other reports put the numbers even higher.

New York State Department of Labor data also shows an increase in the number of establishments employing children and children injured on the job.

The Department reported an increase of 57.1 percent of establishments employing children illegally from 1987 to 1988. The Upstate figure was 26.4 percent and New York City saw a whopping 542.1 percent increase. The number of children found illegally employed went up by 9.5 percent statewide.

A 1988 survey by the New York State Department of Labor indicated that 56 percent of the teenagers surveyed had participated in prohibited work activities or experienced a child labor violation at work. Violations included legal rights not explained, being asked to work off the books, working after midnight, excessive hours, no working papers, using a prohibited machine, working in a prohibited job or being injured on the job.

In February 1990, New York State Commissioner of Labor Thomas F. Hartnett announced he had ordered Victory Markets, Inc. to pay $6,950 in penalties for violating New York State child labor laws, the largest fine ever imposed by the State Labor Department in the child labor protection field.

Bruce D. Butterfield, in a five part series in the Boston *Globe* entitled "The Tragedy of Child Labor," wrote that "America's children are among the nation's most widely exploited workers."

Butterfield went on to state:

> They live in poverty and neglect as they harvest our food, work in hundreds of dingy factories stitching 'Made in America' tags into our clothes, assemble cheap jewelry in trailor homes and tenements, operate dangerous machines in restaurant kitchens and neighborhood stores. In town after town, they serve our fast food meals late at night, prepare our muffins and coffee early in the morning.
>
> Often they are scalded and burned, sliced up by food machines, exposed to pesticides in the field and choking fumes in the factory. They fall and fracture their backs, and break their arms and hands frequently delivering and picking up things for us.
>
> Sometimes, they are left badly maimed or disfigured for life.
>
> Sometimes, they are killed.
>
> Nearly all the time, they get tired, miss school and are ignored.

Butterfield called the increase in child labor law violations "a national shame."

A LEGACY OF SHAME

Child labor has a long history in the United States. Children were expected to work alongside their parents during the Colonial period. They were also frequently hired out to work in households or on local farms performing essentially the same work they did at home. Many boys between the ages of 10 and 14 entered apprenticeships where they learned a skilled trade by loyally following their master's orders. Masters often acted as parents and taught their apprentices skills beyond those of the particular craft being learned. In addition to an education, they were provided room and board.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution it was common for children to work and many saw it as desirable, especially where the income was needed to support widowed mothers, disabled fathers or help escape the miseries of abject poverty. Many thought that work contributed to the moral development of a child, kept them out of trouble and developed habits that would give them an advantage as they entered adulthood.

As America began to industrialize, the nature of work changed. The apprenticeship system declined and was replaced with factory work which was very different. Children were put to work in the factories, mines, and mills and doing piecework at home. The relationship with the employer was dramatically different than that with a master craftsman. Children worked in unsafe and unhealthy conditions for very low pay and very long hours. As workers, they performed simple, routine and often dangerous tasks and learned very little that would improve their skills as a worker. Education was minimal, if any existed at all. Even if children had a day off, they were too tired to learn.

A Smithsonian Institution article entitled "In The Playtime of Others: Child Labor in the Early 20th Century," in its *Art to Zoo* magazine, discusses the work of Lewis Hines who took photographs for the National Child Labor Committee in 1906. The article states, "Over and over, Hines saw children working sixty and seventy-hour weeks, by day and by night, often under hazardous conditions. He saw children caught in the cycle of poverty, with parents often so ill-paid that they could not support a family on their earnings alone, and had to rely on their childrens' earnings as a supplement for their family's survival. He saw children growing up stunted mentally (illiterate or barely able to read because their jobs kept them out of school) and physically (from lack of fresh air, exercise and time to relax and play). He saw countless children who had been injured and permanently disabled on the job; he knew that, in the cotton mills for example, children had accident rates three times those of adults."

Todd Postal, in his *American Educator's* article "Child Labor in the U.S.: Its Growth and Abolition," notes that the 1870 federal census recorded more than a quarter of a million children aged 10 to 15 working in nonagricultural occupations. By 1900, it rose to nearly 700,000. Postal argues that since the Census excluded children under 10 and did not count children working in industrial homework, the street trades or domestic service, the number was much higher. He cites one source who estimated that there were more than 100,000 children working in New York City in the early 1880s.

Alarmed at the growth of child labor and the terrible conditions under which most children worked, a number of reform efforts were initiated.

The American labor movement had long been an opponent of child labor and one of the earliest and strongest supporters of a free universal public education system. The platform of the New York Workingmen's Party in 1829 called for a school system "that shall unite under the same roof the children of the poor man and the rich, the widow's charge and the orphan, where the road to distinction shall be superior industry, virtue and acquirement without reference to descent."

Support for compulsory education was a complement to laws against child labor. "The damnable system which permits young and innocent children to have their lives worked out of them in factories, mills, workshops, and stores, is one of the very worst of labor's grievances," American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers told delegates to the 1893 convention of the Federation. "We shall never close our agitation until we have rescued them, and placed them where they should be, in the schoolroom and the playground."

The 1890s experienced a growth of a social reform movement that included the condition of children and child labor among its concerns. Perhaps most famous among them was Jane Addams who organized Hull House in Chicago in 1889. The Henry Street Settlement in New York City was founded shortly after by Lillian Wald. In 1891, Josephine Shaw Lowell founded the New York City Consumers League to improve working conditions in the city's retail stores. In 1899, the New York Consumers League, along with Consumer Leagues in Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia, organized and chartered the National Consumer League. Florence Kelley, an 1882 graduate of Cornell University and a factory inspector in Illinois, was appointed its first general secretary.

Under Florence Kelley's leadership, the Consumers League played a major role in the fight over child labor. Her plan of action was to "investigate, educate, agitate and/or legislate."

The League helped organize and work with the National Child Labor Committee and pushed for a federal Children's Bureau. The current Executive Director of the League is Linda F. Golodner.

The National Child Labor Committee was formed in 1904 in New York City with many members of the New York City Child Labor Committee (formed in 1902) playing a prominent role and working to expose the horror of child labor and push for reforms in child labor laws. While many states enacted child labor laws late in the 19th century, they were not effectively enforced. It became obvious that federal regulations were needed. Federal legislation was passed in 1916 and 1919 but was declared unconstitutional in a 5-4 decision on the grounds that Congress had exceeded its powers under the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution. The 1916 law known as the Keating-Owen Act prohibited the interstate commerce of goods produced by children under 14 and established an eight-hour day for workers under 16. The subsequent bill imposed a 10 percent tax on the net profits of manufacturers who employed children below the age of 14.

In 1924, Florence Kelle launched a national campaign for ratification of a Constitutional Amendment that would empower Congress to "limit, regulate and prohibit" the employment of persons under 18. The effort failed but did gain approval of 36 states in the process.

It was not until FDR's New Deal in the 1930s that child labor law reform advocates would ultimately gain success. The National Recovery Administration (NRA) limited child labor but it too was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1935. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed and was upheld by the Supreme Court. It raised the full-time working age to 16 and put limitations on the conditions of labor for 14 and 15-year olds. It excluded children involved in migrant agriculture, however.

Every state, including New York, has passed laws regulating child labor prior to and following passage of FLSA. New York State law governs school attendance, minimum ages for employment, employment certificates and permits, prohibited occupations, hours of work, posting provisions, safety and health provisions, minimum wages, state prevailing wages, equal pay provisions, payment of wages, fringe benefits, Workers' Compensation, unemployment insurance, and various other provisions. The law is enforced by the State Labor Department.

WORKING AND LEARNING

Today, three of five twelfth graders and more than a third of tenth graders are employed. Half of the employed teens work in restaurants or retail stores. The average twelfth grader works twenty hours a week and takes home $275 a month.

Laurence Steinberg of the University of Wisconsin and Ellen Greenberger of the University of California reported the effects of work on the lives of high school students in their book *When Teenagers Work: The Psychological and Social Costs of Adolescent Employment.* They concluded that, in general, youngsters who have taken jobs do less homework, miss school more often and say they enjoy school less than students who don't work. They found that if sophomores work more than 14 hours a week and seniors more than 19 hours a week, their grades fall by half to three quarters of a point. They also reported that working teenagers spent less time with their families and used more cigarettes, marijuana and alcohol.

Linda McNeil reports in her book, *Lowering Expectations: The Impact of Student Employment on Classroom Knowledge,* that many students cut back on the number of long-term assignments and the amount of library work and outside reading without realizing it. As a result, teachers assigned less homework because it wasn't being done and many college-bound teenagers were choosing easier courses so they wouldn't have to work so hard.

McNeil also reported that teachers believed after-school employment forced adolescents to choose between the demands of work and school. Students said jobs conflicted with their leisure activities but not school.

A recent study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) entitled "Earning and Learning: The Academic Achievement of High School Juniors With Jobs," found that students who worked more than 20 hours a week exhibit lower proficiency in mathematics, science, history, literature and reading and tended to take less challenging coursework. In addition, NAEP found that eleventh graders' absenteeism increased as the number of hours working a week increased.

In testimony before the New York State Senate and Assembly Standing Committee on Labor Concerning the Employment of Minors, New York State United Teachers President Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr. told legislators that these studies were confirmed by the experience of classroom teachers across the state. Many reported that working students failed to complete homework assignments, fell asleep in class, were frequently late for school, displayed a lack of attentiveness during the morning classes, and did less well in class.

Donna Lynch, a 12th grade social studies teacher at Shenendehowa Central High School in Clifton Park, reported to a joint Congressional committee on labor laws the results of a survey of 500 students done by students in her Citizens in Action class. According to the survey, 55 percent of the students from grades eight through 12 were employed and nearly 20 percent worked more than one job. Twelve percent said they failed to complete assignments due to work. One in three students reported that working affected their school performance and eight percent reported falling asleep. Students who worked reported significantly lower grade point averages than those who did not work. Lynch noted that teachers reported that 75 percent of workers, as opposed to 31 percent on non-workers, failed to complete assignments with 81 percent of those who work failing to meet standards.

Jerald Bachman of the University of Michigan studied what working teens did with the money they earned. Only 15 percent saved most of their earnings and less than 20 percent contributed to supporting their households. Bachman found that 46 percent of the boys who worked and 27 percent of the girls were supporting cars. Three out of four spent some or most of their earnings on movies, stereos, clothes, eating out and similar activities. Nearly two-thirds did save some of their income for college. Bachman concludes that this "premature affluence" will make it difficult for adolescents to sustain such a free wheeling lifestyle when they become adults and have payments for life's necessities.

Research also shows that limited employment for teenagers can result in some benefits. Employment can teach teenagers good workplace habits and practical skills. It can provide them with an opportunity to gain self-confidence and develop a sense of responsibility. Properly done, it can teach them how to save and manage money. In a few cases, it may even be important in helping their family survive. Working in a safe, well-run business can even enhance a child's educational growth as long as the hours of work do not replace their schoolwork or meaningful extra-curricular activities.

CHILD LABOR LEGISLATION

The challenge to public policy makers is to develop a set of conditions that allows adolescents to gain from their work experience while avoiding the pitfalls that teenage employment so often entails.

There are four areas that require attention: strengthening of existing child labor laws at the state and federal level; improving the enforcement of child labor laws; educating teens, parents, employers and educators about labor laws and how students can benefit from work experiences; and initiating mechanisms to insure that work experiences enhance rather than undermine school performance.

Efforts are currently underway at both the state and federal levels to tighten child labor laws.

In his 1988 State of the State Message, Governor Mario Cuomo articulated a renewed commitment by the state to programs that protect children and enhance their quality of life. An important part of his "Decade of the Child" was the charge given to the Department of Labor to reexamine the state's child labor laws and recommend changes. The result was a report from Commissioner of Labor Thomas F. Hartnett entitled "Children in the Workforce: Setting Our Priorities" that called for making education the first priority and placing appropriate limits on teen labor. "Going to school in a child's most important job," the report states.

Governor Cuomo has submitted legislation supported by State Senate Labor Committee Chair James Lack and State Assembly Labor Committee Chair Frank Barbaro to strengthen Labor Law protections for minors based on that report.

The bill attempts to clarify the intent and meaning of the child labor provisions relating to hours of work. It also seeks to reestablish that priority should be given to the education of teenagers and that hours of work should be restricted in such a way as to insure that sufficient time remains in the day for working students to concentrate on studies. For example, the hours of work for minors 16 and 17 when attending school would be cut back from midnight to 10 p.m. and the maximum weekly hours to 28 (down from 48 for 17 year-olds). During vacation periods, 16 and 17 year-olds could work up to 48 hours a week and until midnight. Minors 14 and 15 may not work beyond 7 p.m. when school is in session but would be permitted to work until 9 p.m. when it is not in session or during vacation periods.

Provisions limiting hours of work by minors employed in farm work would also be modified, essentially allowing them to work earlier or later in the day but with no change in the total number of hours. It would also remove an exemption for farm labor for the employment of minors in certain restricted occupations and allow the Commissioner of Labor to promulgate regulations limiting youth employment on farms.

The bill would also increase civil penalties for violation of child labor provisions from the current maximum of $500 to a maximum of $1,000 for the

first violation, $2,000 for the second violation and $3,000 for a third or subsequent violation. It also provides that where the violation involves employment during which a minor is seriously injured or dies, the penalty shall be three times the maximum available penalty.

In his report to the Governor, Commissioner Hartnett also recommended a number of changes in the administration of child labor. He recommended that the Department of Labor work in conjunction with the State Education Department to ensure that the process of certifying minors for employment promote efforts to inform minors as well as employers of the child labor law and a means for enforcing them. Specifically, the recommendations would:

* consolidate the various Employment Certificates and Farmwork permit into a single certificate issued at age 14 to all in-school youth who make a one-time application,

* develop school curriculum materials regarding child labor laws and employment responsibilities,

* make issuance of certificates contingent upon evidence that the youth had attended a child labor law course,

* convene a series of meetings with appropriate agencies to focus on the problems of certificates, data collection, systems linking school to the world of work and child labor law education.

The New York State Senate and Assembly Standing Committes on Labor held hearings on the proposed legislation in 1990 but the Legislature failed to act. The legislation will be before the Legislature in its 1991 session.

The United States Congress is also active on the child labor issue. The House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor held hearings on the Young American Workers' Bill of Rights Act of 1990. The bill is sponsored by Charles Schumer (D-NY) in the House and Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) in the Senate. While the proposed bill was not adopted, the Reconciliation Bill passed in the last days of the 101st Congress did create a civil penalty ceiling of $10,000 for each violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act provisions relating to child labor. However, conferees agreed to drop the minimum $1,000 penalty that was included in the House bill.

The House bill would also add new reporting requirements that would assist Congress and others in oversight of child labor law provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The proposed legislation would reduce the hours a minor under federal law could work to 15 hours a week. In addition, it would set forth various specific hazardous occupations and industries that should be banned for child labor below the age of 18. It would establish a permanent special advisory committee to the Department of Labor.

The bill is supported by a number of national organizations including the Child Labor Coalition. The Child Labor Coalition is co-chaired by the National Consumers League, the American Youth Work Center and the International Labor Rights Education and Research Fund. The coalition of 32 national

organizations represents educators, religious groups, organized labor, women's groups, youth and child advocacy organizations, health professionals, farmworkers, senior citizens, and other public interest organizations.

In an effort to reduce child labor throughout the world (the International Labor Organization estimates that at least 200 million children worldwide under the age of 15 are employed) the AFL-CIO and others have successfully pushed for legislation to deny preferential trading status to countries with documented workers rights violations including a country's lack of enforcement of its own standards that set a minimum age for employment. Other legislative remedies would penalize companies that import products made with child labor. While some corporations such as Corning Glass have stopped purchasing from suppliers that use child labor in their production process, legislation penalizing corporations that continue to contract with shops that use child labor is needed.

THE PROBLEM OF ENFORCEMENT

While major improvements in the child labor laws are needed at every level, the laws will be meaningless unless they are effectively enforced. While former Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole's "Operation Child Watch" found 7,000 minors working illegally in one week and gained a great deal of national attention, it is the exception and not the rule for child labor law enforcement. There are only 15 federal wage inspectors, for example, to cover four of New York City's huge boroughs and they do not often look for child labor law violations. There are only 1,000 nationwide. The New York State Department of Labor is also vastly understaffed to enforce child labor laws. Since the system is basically "complaint" driven, most violations are never discovered because working minors are either ignorant of the law, afraid to report the violation for fear of losing their job or willing to work under illegal conditions.

One bright spot is New York State's Garment Industry Task Force which has no equal in the federal government or in any other state. The 34-member task force under the direction of Hugh McDaid works hard to uncover child labor law violations, as well as other illegal practices in the garment industry. From January 1988 to November 1990, the task force investigated 394 garment shops illegally employing 553 children, some as young as nine. Over 548 shops were charged with giving out illegal homework, a notorious method of using child labor for as little as a dollar an hour. Even with their success, McDaid is the first to admit that they have only dented the problem.

The enforcement process not only needs more investigators but the process must shift from just making appointments and looking at books to unannounced visits at workplaces when children are mostly likely there. Efforts should also be made to focus on the worst violations. The Garment Industry Task Force, albeit understaffed, is an excellent model.

THE LABOR LEGACY COMMITTEE

Since enforcement of child labor laws is essentially "complaint" driven, it is important that teenagers be informed of their rights under the labor law so they will know when violations occur and what steps they can take to remedy the situation. To that end, a broad-based group of organizations formed the Labor Legacy Committee and embarked on a curriculum project designed to acquaint teens with state labor law provisions. The members of the Labor Legacy Committe include the New York State AFL-CIO, the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, the New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the U. S. Constitution (until its expiration in 1990), the New York State Department of Education, the New York State Department of Labor, the New York State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, the New York State United Teachers, the New York State Workers' Compensation Board, and the Russell Sage College Council for Citizenship Education.

The curriculum guide, entitled, *The Working Teenager*, was prepared for use in the module "The Working Citizen" which is required in the Introduction to Occupations course. An estimated 67,000 students a year take the course.

"The Working Citizen" module contained in the state syllabus calls for students to be able to outline the "major laws and regulations as they relate to the average employee." Specifically, the syllabus requires students to be familiar with standard labor and safety laws as well as unemployment insurance and workers' compensation laws.

The curriculum guide contains five lessons: Introduction to Worker Rights; Employment of Minors and Working Papers; Hours, Minimum Wage, Payment of Wages and Prohibited Occupations; Prevailing Wage Rate; and Unemployment Benefits and Workers' Compensation. The guide includes background materials, short answer questions, case studies, a teachers' guide and a test. Transparency masters and supporting reference materials are also available with the guide.

Since its original mailing to the Occupational Education teachers throughout New York State, the guide has been distributed to a number of other organizations and individuals. In addition, officials of the New York State Department of Labor has been available to visit schools to assist teachers and have conducted workshops at various meetings.

Also produced in conjunction with the curriculum guide were a poster entitled "The Working Teenager" and 50,000 bookcovers based on the poster. Both items have been widely distributed.

The Labor Legacy Committee is currently working on a curriculum guide keyed to the seventh and eighth grade social studies course, "United States and New York State History." The guide, which should be available in late 1991, will include fifteen lessons focusing on child labor throughout history. Each lesson will contain a statement of objectives, understandings and concepts, historical overview for the teacher, historical background for students, a case

study, reproducible material, lists of questions and suggested activities and a bibliography of additional resources. The case study approach of the guide will feature profiles of children at work during each of the fourteen eras contained in the state syllabus.

The purpose of this curriculum guide is to provide students with a historical perspective of child labor so they can better understand the complexities of the issue today both from a domestic and international viewpoint.

THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOL AND WORK

Concern with child labor must include the relationship of work to educational performance. The highest priority must be on protecting children and insuring that their work experiences enchance, rather than detract from, their educational experience.

Employment of high school students has been growing steadily since the mid 1960s. More than half of all high school students work at any given time and another quarter are looking for work. Also, the reasons why students are working are changing. During the first half of the century, students worked because they had to and, as a result, more poor students worked. Today, it is just the opposite.

Most jobs employing youth are low-skilled and offer little training. Rarely is there any linkage to the schools except for formal work-study and cooperative education programs.

Junior Achievement, a program designed to teach young people about the world of business enrolls 1.2 million students in 14,000 schools. Teenagers sell stock to create their company, choose a product, elect officers and eventually close the company and take the profits they earned. In the Micro-Society School of Lowell, Massachusetts, students built a society in miniature. Children create and run small business and cultural organizations where they learn to use money to buy, sell, save and invest. They create government agencies to govern classroom rule-making.

These programs are the exception and few, if any, link students actual job experience to their schooling.

The issue is of growing importance because of the increasing educational demands of the workplace. America's businesses are restructuring and, as a result, demanding more of employees, especially those without four-year college degrees. Workers on the shop floor are being empowered, working more with technology, working in self-directed teams, doing more problem-solving and using more higher-order thinking and reasoning skills. The intellectual and skill demands of the workplace of tomorrow require major improvements in the education of the non-college bound and the fifty percent of those who are four-year college drop outs. Our schools offer little or no assistance to those who will be directly entering the workforce. The result is that the typical high school graduate will move from one dead-end job to another until their early twenties.

The school-to-work transition and the implications for valuable work experiences while in high school are gaining attention. The National Center on Education and the Economy's excellent report entitled *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages* makes a number of thoughtful and sound recommendations to help prepare young people for the jobs of tomorrow. Their concept of a "Certificate of Initial Mastery" which would be required before a student could work or go on to advanced education has major implications for working teenagers, as does their proposal for "Local Youth Centers."

Cornell University Professor Stephen F. Hamilton's book, *Apprenticeship for Adulthood: Preparing Youth for the Future*, makes a strong case for expanding the apprenticeship concept. Hamilton's proposal encourages rethinking the school-to-work process and the role work for students would play.

Hamilton argues that a system of apprenticeship would motivate youth to learn in school and would ease their transition into adult careers. He states that while the German apprenticeship system cannot be transplanted to the United States, we could develop our own form of apprenticeship linking schools and workplace by teaching some of the same knowledge and skills in both settings. He argues that this would simultaneously provide greater motivation for learning in school and a real alternative environment for learning. Hamilton says that when teenagers are isolated from jobs that require academic learning they develop short-sighted priorities.

Hamilton proposes a variety of options, including exploratory apprenticeships where students would engage in community service work, school-based apprenticeships where students would work in school-run enterprises such as restaurants or daycare centers, and work-based apprenticeships that would combine schooling with apprenticeship over a period spanning two years of high school and two years of technical college. Hamilton's major point is that the educational experience can be vastly enriched if linked with meaningful work experiences.

While Hamilton's concept of expanding the apprenticeship model to provide students with work-based experiences has value, there is a danger that, if it is not done properly, it will undermine existing apprenticeship systems which have served our economy well, especially the construction industry. The traditional construction industry apprenticeship model, which is subject to government regulations, requires sponsors to design training programs which produce a journeyman who is not only able to perform certain tasks under supervision, but also to function under self-direction. There are currently legislative and regulatory attempts underway at both the state and federal levels to undercut existing apprenticeship standards. Replacing apprenticeship wage scales with "stipends," or weakening on-the-job training or related instruction would not help achieve a high-quality workforce but create an army of workers who do not have the necessary skills and no prospects for skilled employment. If apprenticeship is to be expanded, which it should, it should be with the same high standards and characteristics of those programs we know work and prepare workers for good jobs that exist.

Another Cornell Professor, John H. Bishop, has done some fascinating research on linkage between school and work.

Bishop's ideas have been embraced in a reported entitled "The Vital Link: Motivating Student Achievements" that has been released by the American Business Conference (ABC). "We in business can make a substantive contribution by collaborating with educators to show students the skills and standards required in the workplace and their employment and post-secondary options. We can help students understand the connection between school and workplace careers, and we can require and reward personal achievement," the report states. Among the findings of the research and surveys, the ABC Education Task Force responsible for the report, found that, generally, no formal means of communication exists between companies and high school students, entry-level employees are not hired based on a complete record of personal school achievement, and the majority of high school students are left with little guidance or understanding as to why they should excel academically.

The "vital link" is to make the connection between school and work, for "business to not only define the correlation between student achievement and employment, but to reward excellence." The major flaw in both Bishop's work and the ABC report is that it fails to focus on employment while students are still in school. There is no reason why the very same principles cannot apply to after school and summer employment for teenagers.

Many retailers and fast food enterprises may be against this arguing that it will make it even more difficult to find enough workers in a tight labor market. However, if students (and parents and teachers) knew that a student's job would not only pay in dollars but be concerned about, and help improve, their school work as well as future job prospects, they would have an advantage over other employers. And if the labor market begins to produce more teen workers than are required because of a softening economy, employers will be in an even better position to tie employment opportunities to school performance.

New York State United Teachers President Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr., in testimony before the New York State Senate and Assembly Standing Committee on Labor,suggested four activities for improving the education-work experience for students. They are:

1. The issuance of work permits should be tied to academic standards similar to the criteria developed in many districts for participation in sports.

2. At the time of initial employment, employees should contact the school to determine the student's grades and potential academic problems. The employer could follow-up with school personnel throughout the school year to determine if the work experience is hindering the student's academic success and to develop ways that the experience could be connected to the student's schooling.

3. Local business concerns should work with school administrators and teachers in how to best provide sound work experience which is not detrimental to students' school performance but relates to and enhances their knowledge and skills.

4. Employers should play a role in motivating students to dedicate more time to studies and to limit their work hours.

In testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor on the Young American Workers' Bill of Rights, AFL-CIO Director of Research Rudy Oswald argued that child labor regulations should be "designed to encourage education and to circumscribe work so that it does not inhibit education." He said that the AFL-CIO agreed with the bill's amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act requiring that children below the age of 18 be required to have a certificate that would be reviewed annually so that the work relationship to education could be regularly reviewed.

Oswald argued that the work certification should require approval of the minor's parents, family physician, and local school or state employment security agency officials. The certificate should ensure that a child be physically fit for employment and that it is safe and not hazardous to the child's health. School authorities, according to Oswald, should be able to cancel or limit the certification if school performances or attendance does not meet acceptable standards during the year or if summer school attendance is needed. "It is the AFL-CIO's position that the basic occupation for all young persons should be their education," Oswald testified.

Changes in the workplace have implications for the skills our students must learn and the ways they are taught. Education must become responsive to these needs and reflect the merging research findings on how people learn most effectively. These findings challenge the traditional formal approach to instruction in our schools that has caused artificial distinctions between knowing and doing, education and training, academic and vocational education, and school-based and work-based learning. The workplace offers the possibility of being an extension of the school rather than a force that hinders education if schools and employers can form new partnerships that promote the work site as a learning environment.

A report prepared by Pelavin Associates, Inc. for the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) entitled "Identifying and Describing The Skills Required by Work" has focused on this issue.

They report that cognitive researchers have found that intelligence and expertise are built out of interaction with the environment, not in isolation from it. Skills are often taught in isolation where learners get little practice in applying and combining skills. Studies reveal a surprising lack of transfer of theoretical principles, processes, or skills learned in class to practice. For example, research shows that extensive training in electronics and trouble-shooting theories provides very little knowledge and fewer skills applicable to performing electronics trouble-shooting.

Although "learning to know," "learning to do," and their "application" are often separated, there is no effective learning or understanding of one kind without the other two. As University of Pittsburgh professor Lauren Resnick points out, most school learning is symbol-based. When symbolic activities become detached from meaningful context school learning becomes a matter of

learning rules and saying or writing things according to the rules. Outside school, actions are intimately connected with things and events. When students are engaged with things and situations that make sense, they do not forget what calculating or what their reasonings are about. Their mental activities make sense in terms of immediate effects, and their actions are grounded in the logic of immediate situations.

Knowledge and skills are often taught in ways that do not replicate the settings in which the work must be performed. This teaching out of context impedes the transfer of learning to new settings.

Cognitive science strongly implies that people learn best when they are taught in the context of situations, activities and problems. Learning in a context provides meaning and therefore motivation to learn. It helps to break down the separation between knowledge and practice that has resulted from the formal approach to instruction in schools and the resulting mismatch between schools and work.

Of course, not all "contextualized learning" need take place at worksites. Schools can be restructured similar to the Lowell Micro-Society School to provide appropriate context for learning but capitalizing on the real world of work many students already experience would be a good way to take advantage of a "contextualized learning" approach. Much greater cooperation between schools and local employers than is now evident is necessary, however, if the workplace is to be used to provide "contextualized learning" environments for students. Schools do not know much about the workplace (especially the changing workplace) and employers do not know much about education and school. Much can and should be done to close the gap. In addition to reinforcing specific academic skills, a cooperative approach can also help develop and use thinking skills, reasoning skills, problem-solving skills, cooperative group/team skills, responsibility, reliability and so on. Business can identify the skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes needed on the job and how they relate to the school curricula. Labor unions can also be helpful in assisting schools to identify and teach appropriate skills as well as develop an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of employees.

Employers must view teen workers more than a commodity to be exploited and view their place of work as a learning environment. Schools must take the initiative to help employers turn their establishments into learning environments and prepare students for work and reinforce positive lessons learned from work.

A number of schools are already moving in this direction and some on a very formal basis. In New York City, for example, the Academy of Finance, initiated by Shearson Lehman Hutton (American Express) enrolls high school juniors in special classes on business and finance and gives them summer jobs in the financial services industry.

Work can be an educationally rewarding experience for teenagers if the hours are reasonable, the work is safe and healthy, and affirmative steps are taken to use the work experience to enhance schoolwork. Students can gain

important experience and learn skills and work habits necessary to be a good employee. They can also learn how to effectively manage their time and money if they are given the proper advice from home, school and concerned employers. Regretably, this is too infrequently the case in today's world. Many retail and food merchant associations view students simply as a means to fill a growing labor shortage and oppose child labor law reforms and efforts to make work a valued educational experience. A representative of a large supermarket chain told the Joint Senate/Assembly hearing held in Albany that further restricting hours would encourage companies complying with existing child labor laws to dodge the tougher guidelines. In other words, some employers are publicly admitting that in order to maintain profits they will willingly violate state labor laws.

Scores of national reports have lamented the failure of America's public schools to prepare a world-class workforce for jobs that are demanding more knowledge and greater skills. Major U. S. corporations and organized labor are among the leaders calling for quality education. That goal is shared by parents, administrators, teachers and others responsible for educating tomorrow's workforce. Putting an end to illegal and exploitive child labor and making work an enriching experience will help achieve that goal.

As Samuel Gompers said, "There is a time to grow and a time to develop which never returns..."

Children at work - peril or promise?

It can be either...the choice is ours.

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